

Thank you for joining Marsha and me so I can tell you personally I will be a candidate for re-election this fall.

We have made tremendous progress in the last three years, especially in the wake of Katrina; but a lot remains to be done. I ask the voters of Mississippi to let me finish the job.

I will run a campaign based on my record...a record of promises made and promises kept.

When I became Governor just over three years ago, Mississippi had lost 38,000 jobs under the previous administration; we were the worst state in the country for lawsuit abuse; our state treasury was in the deepest financial hole in history; and a drug crime wave was sweeping our state.

I spoke to those issues in my campaign. I said “We can do better, if we’ll give strong leadership a chance.” I proposed solutions which have been implemented, and the results speak for themselves.

With strong support from Lt. Governor Amy Tuck and the State Senate, we passed the most comprehensive tort reform bill in the country, and it has ended the health care crisis caused by lawsuit abuse.

We have dug out of our financial hole, going from a \$720 budget shortfall to a \$70 million surplus in just two budget years ...and we’ve done it without raising anybody’s taxes.

But we didn’t get to a budget surplus by shortchanging our priorities. This fall state spending on our K-12 schools will be \$500 million more than it was when I became Governor. This is the largest increase in K-12 spending in any four year period under any governor in Mississippi history.

Our teachers are earning more than ever.

State spending to support community colleges and universities has seen similar increases during this administration.

Education is the state’s top priority but a leader’s commitment to education should not be judged by the amount of money he spends; his commitment to education should be judged by the results he demands and achieves for our children.

And we have made education reforms that will help make sure our students are getting your money’s worth in the classroom.

Working together, we’ve also made law enforcement a priority, with more state resources and new tools to crack down on drug crime.

Good policies generate good results, as we have seen in terms of job creation and higher incomes. After losing 38,000 jobs during the previous four years, Mississippi has had a net gain of 35,000 jobs in the last three years, despite Katrina; and incomes have increased along with wages and salaries.

And I tell you confidently that we will have record employment in our state this year... more people working than ever before.

While tort reform, job losses, drug crime and the budget crisis were obvious issues in the 2003 campaign, there was no way to see Katrina coming.

Our state bore the brunt of the worst natural disaster in American history, and through it, our people showed themselves to be strong, resilient, self-reliant... courageous and selfless.

The Coast and South Mississippi have made tremendous progress since the storm. Even at a record pace, it is never fast enough to suit me. And despite all our great people have accomplished, there is still a mighty tall mountain in front of us.

Marsha and I ask you to let us lead our state over that mountain.

Just as I fought hard to solve the problems we faced when you elected me in 2003, I am equally prepared to make sure Mississippi takes full advantage of the unprecedented opportunities available to us these next few years.

It is vividly clear to me that our state has entered a period of economic growth and increased prosperity for more people than ever. The table is set for Mississippi to make a great leap forward.

With strong leadership and good policies, we can give our children and grandchildren more and greater opportunity than my generation ever dreamed of.

Marsha and I would be honored if you and your fellow Mississippians allow us to provide that leadership. We ask you for your vote, your support and your prayers.

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